

**MEEMAN-SHELBY FOREST STATE NATURAL AREA**  
**CLASS II NATURAL-SCIENTIFIC STATE NATURAL AREA**

**COUNTY:** Shelby

**7.5' QUADRANGLE:** Locke, Pecan Point

**PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCE:** Mississippi  
Alluvial Floodplain

**ACREAGE:** 11,000

**OWNERSHIP:** State of Tennessee

**YEAR DESIGNATED:** 2002

**DESCRIPTION:** Meeman-Shelby Forest State Natural Area is an 11,000-acre natural area in Shelby County and is located within Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park. Primary management responsibility belongs to Tennessee State Parks. There is also a Wildlife Management Area within the State Park that is managed by the Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency. Meeman-Shelby Forest State Natural Area is one of the largest contiguous tracts of mature bottomland hardwood forest and upland forest associated with the Chickasaw Bluff left in Tennessee. The natural area includes approximately 7,000 acres of Mississippi Alluvial Plain and approximately 4,000 acres of Chickasaw Bluff.

The bottomlands undulate from cypress dominated sloughs and bayous to bottomland hardwood with a few feet of topographic relief. Cypress sloughs are dominated by bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) and southern hackberry (*Celtis laevigata*) with an understory of black willow (*Salix nigra*), green ash (*Fraxinus pensylvanica*), and water elm (*Planera aquatica*). Bottomland hardwoods are dominated by cottonwoods (*Populus deltoids*), sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*), and southern hackberry. East of the vast bottomlands, the Third Chickasaw Bluff rises abruptly from the floodplain. The bluff vegetation is variable according to slope aspect but is characterized by sweet gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), white and red oaks (*Quercus* sp.), and beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) with a distinctive understory of red buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*).

Meeman-Shelby is particularly significant because so much of west Tennessee's rivers and streams have been seriously altered, resulting in a loss of vast bottomland hardwood forests that were once prevalent. This large natural area provides refugia for many populations of state listed rare species within the park and natural area including creeping spot-flower (*Acmella oppositifolia*), copper iris (*Iris fulva*), and cedar elm (*Ulmus crassifolia*). The least interior tern and bald eagle are two federally listed bird species that have been recorded in the bottomlands here. The natural area is also home to eleven state champion trees; the largest of their species in Tennessee.

**SITE MANAGEMENT:** Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park, 910 Riddick Rd., Millington, TN 38053, phone (901) 876-5201. Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, Shelby Forest Wildlife Management Area, 200 Lowell Thomas Drive, Jackson TN 38301, phone (731) 423-5725. Division of Natural Areas, Jackson Environmental Assistance Center, 362 Carriage House Drive, Jackson TN 38305-2222, phone (731) 512-1369. Division of Natural Areas, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor L&C Annex, 401 Church St., Nashville TN, 37243-0447, phone (615) 532-0431.

**PUBLIC ACCESS:** The state park and wildlife management area provide parking, access roads, and trails. The area is open to hiking, boating, fishing, and hunting.

**DIRECTIONS:** Head west on I-40 into Memphis to exit 2A. From the exit, turn right and go 6 stop-lights to Watkins road (Hwy 388). Turn left on Watkins and follow until dead end. Turn left, go 1 mile to 4-way stop. Turn right, go 1 mile, park entrance is on the left.